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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/555,447	11/03/2005	Akiko Fujino	043888-0411	4156

53080 7590 01/26/2007
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WASHINGTON, DC 20005-3096

EXAMINER

WANG, EUGENIA

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1745

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	01/26/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/555,447

Applicant(s)

FUJINO ET AL.

Examiner

Eugenia Wang

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 11/3/05 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date 11/3/05.

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

1. The information disclosure statement filed November 3, 2005 has been placed in the application file and the information referred to therein has been considered as to the merits.

Drawings

2. The drawings submitted November 3, 2005 are accepted.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1, 4, and 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US 6287720 (Yamashita et al.).

As to claims 1, 4, and 8, Yamashita et al. teach a nonaqueous secondary battery with a nonaqueous electrolyte with a positive electrode comprising cathode active material, a negative electrode comprising anode active material, and a separator disposed between the positive and negative electrodes, operatively with the electrolyte (col. 5, lines 8-23). Furthermore, Yamashita et al. exemplify a lithium ion secondary battery with a cathode active material made of a composite of a lithium oxide (col. 11, lines 7-10). Additionally, an anode active material inherently has the property of absorbing and desorbing lithium. Example 6 has a separator [13B] made of

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polyethylene (as applied to claims 1 and 4) (col. 30, lines 63-66). Additionally, example 6 has a second layer of the separator that acts as a porous film [13A] made of insulating substance (filler) α -Al₂O₃ and binder polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF), where the porous film [13A] is directly formed on the cathode active material layer [11b] (col. 29, lines 51-58; col. 30, lines 5-8). Fig. 7(b) shows with all of the structural attributes of example 6 and can additionally be spirally wound to form a spirally wound unit cell (as applied to claim 8) (col. 16, lines 41-48).

The teachings of Yamashita et al. have been discussed above and are herein incorporated.

As to claim 6, Yamashita et al. teaches different binders. Examples include PVDF (as used in previously cited example 6) and acrylonitrile-butadiene (copolymer latex) (col. 7, lines 59-65).

As to claim 7, the weight ratio of α -Al₂O₃ to PVDF is 100/5. Therefore, the weight percentage is:

$$\frac{wt_alumina}{total_wt} = \frac{100}{100+5} * 100\% = 95.2\%$$

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5. Claims 2, 3, and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamashita et al..

The teachings of Yamashita et al. have been discussed above and are herein incorporated.

As to claims 2 and 5, Yamashita et al. teaches a separator [13A, 13B] with a thickness between 100 nm to 100 μ m.

Yamashita et al. does not mention the thicknesses of each individual section of the separator: 15 μ m to 50 μ m for the non-woven fabric [13B] and 0.5 μ m to 20 μ m

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[13A] for the porous film layer (as applied to claims 2 and 5, respectively). The combined range of these two sections yields between 15.5 μm to 70 μm .

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to make Yamashita et al.'s separator with the ranges specified by claims 2 and 5, as it has been held that when the difference between a claimed invention and the prior art is the range or value of a particular variable, then a prima facie rejection is properly established when the difference in the range or value is minor. Titanium Metals Corp. of Am. v. Banner, 778 F.2d 775, 783, 227 USPQ 773, 779 (Fed. Cir. 1985). Additionally, claims that differ from the prior art only by slightly different (non-overlapping) ranges are prima facie obvious without a showing that the claimed range achieves unexpected results relative to the prior art. (*In re Woodruff*, 16 USPQ2d 1935,1937 (Fed. Cir. 1990))

As to claim 3, in example 6, Yamashita et al. teaches a non-woven fabric comprising separator comprising polyethylene [13B], as previously mentioned. The resulting resin has a melting point of 140°C (col. 32, lines 2-5).

Yamashita et al.'s example does not teach that the melt-down temperature is 150°C or more.

However, polypropylene is likened to polyethylene in function by Yamashita et al. (col. 7, lines 7-9). Additionally it is said that polypropylene has a melting point of about 180°C (col 7, lines 45-46). Example 6 discloses the claimed invention except for using polypropylene instead of polyethylene. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use polyethylene, since it

has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416. Therefore, by using polypropylene, the temperature limitations set by claim 3 of the instant application would be satisfied.

Alternately, Yamashita et al. teaches a two layer separator, the first being an inorganic oxide layer, as exemplified by [13B], and the second being an aggregate form of particles of a resin, as exemplified by [13A]. The former has a high melting point (1000°C or more), and the latter has a low melting point (200°C or less) (col. 9, lines 64-67; col. 10, line 1). Therefore, the difference between melting point temperatures (140°C, in example 6) and that of a claimed resin are not significantly different. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to pick a second layer of the separator to have a melting point up to 200°C, since generally, differences in ranges will not support the patentability of subject matter encompassed by the prior art unless there is evidence indicating such ranges is critical. *In re Boesch*, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980). *In re Aller*, 220 F.2d 454, 456, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955). *In re Hoeschele*, 406 F.2d 1403, 160 USPQ 809 (CCPA 1969).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Eugenia Wang whose telephone number is 571-272-4942. The examiner can normally be reached on 8 - 4:30 Mon. - Fri., EST.

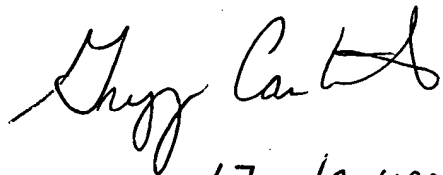
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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Ryan can be reached on 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

EW

GREGG CANTELMO
PRIMARY EXAMINER


17 January 2007